



PRESS RELEASE

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Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Awards \$1 Million Urban Outdoor Recreation Grant for Avondale Promenade Park *Grant Will be Matched on a 50/50 Basis for the Development of Neighborhood Park in Montrose Area*

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) has been awarded a \$1 million Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (T.P.W.D.) Urban Outdoor Recreation Grant for the Avondale Promenade Park project (424 Westheimer Road). The grant is one of thirty-seven grants awarded by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission on March 23, 2017.

"We are thankful to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission for this funding which will allow us to develop Avondale Promenade Park," said Mayor Sylvester Turner. "When completed, this neighborhood park will provide needed greenspace in a very densely built area and its amenities will blend beautifully with the community."

The grants allocate to local government entities appropriated state and federal funding dedicated for the acquisition and/or development of public recreation areas and facilities in Texas on a 50/50 reimbursement match basis. The purchase price of the property was used toward the required local match, thanks to H.P.A.R.D. locking in an approved waiver of retroactivity from T.P.W.D. before closing on the property.

Ellen Cohen, Mayor Pro Tem, District C Council Member, and Chair of the Quality of Life Committee, contributed \$25,000 to fund preliminary design concepts for the project. The process included two community meetings to gather input for a basic site plan and cost estimates to submit the grant application to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Urban Outdoor Recreation grant program.

"I know how critical it is that we maintain and increase our greenspaces in Houston, particularly in rapidly densifying neighborhoods like Montrose," said Mayor Pro Tem Cohen.

"This is why I have advocated for the Avondale Promenade Park and why I'm thrilled the department has received the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission's generous matching grant. The plans highlight the historic nature of Avondale and relocation of the L.G.B.T. Remembrance Garden to a permanent home and create a true community park."

Since 2004, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department has been awarded \$16,814,550 in grant funds from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in the form of Urban Outdoor, Urban Indoor, Recreational Trail and CO-OP grants.

"I am thankful to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission for this award and for their support of our department's projects for the past thirteen years," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "It is gratifying to be able to end my career with the department with this final grant fund from the Commission."

Avondale Promenade Park will be designed to blend the uniqueness of its neighborhood with amenities that can be used by all ages and abilities. The conceptual plan is composed of Craftsman-style park amenities that are reminiscent of the history and culture of the community. These amenities include a promenade with a stone column entry and brick paving, a community plaza with shelter, interpretive signage, seating, lighting, and remembrance garden markers. The central promenade will lead park users to a fenced, off-leash dog area, an accessible play area and a picnic/game table area. The proposed project converts a quarter acre of impervious asphalt into parkland that will provide families, seniors and individuals of all abilities with an accessible, outdoor recreational venue.

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,851 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.